

SIGHT FOR THOSE WHO SEE NOT NO. 1798

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 14, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."
John 9:39.

THE great day of judgment is not as yet. God in infinite long-suffering waits to be gracious, giving men space wherein to repent, and to be reconciled to Him. Jesus has come into the world for judgment, but not for that last and eternally unchangeable judgment which awaits us all. That hour and that advent will arrive, we have the declaration of God's Word for it. Read in Matthew twenty-five "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."

There is no question as to this sure fact, even if many more centuries should pass away, the dread assize will be held in due season. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." He is full of tenderness and long-suffering, and therefore He tarries, but the vision will come, it will not tarry. Settle this in your minds, and live as in the presence of that august tribunal.

Though the day of judgment is not at this hour, yet our Lord Jesus is now carrying on a form of judgment in the world. "His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." He sits as a refiner separating ever and anon his silver from the dross. His cross has revealed the thoughts of many hearts, and everywhere His Gospel is acting as a discoverer, as a separator, and as a test by which men may judge themselves, if they will.

It is a very happy circumstance when a man is willing to accept the Lord's judgment day by day, permitting the law itself to judge him before the Lawgiver ascends the tribunal. Happy are those people toward whom a present judgment is being exercised, of whom Paul says, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Saints are judged now by a fatherly discipline, that they may not be judged hereafter by a judicial condemnation.

Our Lord's great design in coming into the world is the salvation of men. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," but in order to that salvation, it is necessary that men should know the truth about themselves, and should take up a truthful position before God, for God will not endure a lie, neither will He save men upon false grounds. He will deal with all His creatures according to truth, if He condemns them it will be because equity requires it, and if He saves them it will be because He has found a way by which mercy and truth are met together.

So, then, everywhere throughout the world, wherever Christ comes—comes by His Gospel and the consequences of it—a judgment is going on. Men are set before the judgment seat of their Savior, they are tested, tried, made manifest, and declared. Light no sooner comes into the world than it begins to judge the darkness. Scarcely had it been known to be darkness if the light had not revealed the contrast.

Where the Gospel comes, some hearts receive it at once, and are judged to be "honest and good ground," men who are willing to accept the Gospel come to the light that their deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. Other hearts at once hate the truth, for they are the children of darkness, and therefore "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." You see, then, how without its being the main intention of Christ's coming into the world, it yet becomes a

secondary effect, and so far, an incidental purpose of His coming, that His very appearance among the sons of men should judge them. In this glass they see their own countenances, and discover their spots, by this plummet line they test their own uprightness, and see how far they lean towards evil. Under the sign of the Gospel the Lord has set up a public weigh-house. Do you not see the great scales?—they are correct to a hair. Come here and test yourselves. Even in this banqueting house of love, truth marks her own, and sets her brand on counterfeits. God has a fire of trial in Zion, and a furnace of test in Jerusalem.

At this hour I pray that the Gospel may have a dividing effect in this house.

Observe with care that *wherever Jesus Christ comes the most decided effects follow*. “I am come that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” Neither to the right nor to the wrong is Christ indifferent. Whoever you may be, if you hear the Gospel at any time it must have some effect upon you. It will either be to your soul “a savor of life unto life,” or else “a savor of death unto death.” It will be antidote or poison, curing or killing, softening the conscience or searing it. It will either, make you see, or else, because you fancy that you see, its very brightness will make you blind, like Saul of Tarsus, who cried, “I could not see for the glory of that light.”

You cannot be indifferent to the Gospel if you become a hearer of it. “I have come,” said Christ—that fact none of you can escape, “for judgment I am come,” and that judgment must take place in your mind and conscience whether you will it or not. This coming and judgment have a wonderfully marked and decided effect. It is not that of a little improvement or of slight alteration, it is the turning of things upside down, so that, “they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” It is a very violent change—from light to darkness, or from darkness to light.

In either case it is an absolute reversion of your condition. Now, the Gospel will do just that for you, if you live without it, it will make you die, if you feel that you are dead without it, it will make you live. “He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.”

Learn hence that there will always be some effect upon the human mind wherever Christ comes, and that this effect will be a very decided one, changing all their conditions as much as if the laws of nature were reversed. The Lord’s approach to a soul will lift it into the light more and more gloriously, or else it will plunge it into deeper darkness, deeper responsibility, deeper guilt, and consequently deeper woe.

Well may we justify that faithful preacher of the word who, in the middle of his sermon, suddenly stopped, and cried, “Woe is me! What am I doing? I am preaching Christ to you, and while I hope some of you are receiving Him, and so I am leading you toward heaven, many others of you are rejecting Him, and thus I am increasing your responsibility and your guilt. Thus I am doing evil instead of good to you. Woe is me!”

God help His poor servant, I have often felt the sweet preaching of the Gospel to be bitter work. I do not wonder that dark thoughts come over the earnest preacher, I wish his hearers would partake with him in his anxieties. May we unite in deep concern tonight, I will pray for God’s blessing upon every one of you, and do you pray earnestly that no word of mine may be unprofitable to you. When preacher and hearer draw the same way the chariot wheels move to music, and that music is salvation. Come, Spirit of the living God, and make it to be so.

Now, I want to take you immediately to the text, and I shall dwell upon two points of it if there should be time. If not, I shall keep to one only. The first is enough to begin with, CHRIST HAS COME THAT THOSE WHO SEE NOT MAY SEE.

It is a very wonderful thing about the Gospel that it is meant for people who think themselves most unsuited for it, and most undeserving of it—it is a sight for those who see not. An anxious friend gave me the other day a description of himself which was enough to make a man stand aghast to hear it. With many sighs and tears, he described to me the condition of a man lost by nature and by practice, and unable to help himself in the least degree. When he had completed his story—I let him finish it, and touch it up with a few extra strokes of black—I took him by the hand, and said, “I am sure that you are

one of those whom Christ came into the world to save. You have given me the most accurate description possible of one of God's elect when aroused to see his state by nature before the Most Holy God. You are one of those for whom the Gospel was intended." I spoke boldly, for I felt that I was only stating the truth.

Since Jesus Christ came into the world to open men's eyes, I know that He did not come to open the eyes of some of those around me, for they have bright eyes, which smile on me while I am now speaking, and seem to say—"No oculist is needed here!" I cast my eyes all round the place, and I see nothing for the great Opener-of-eyes to do till I pause at yonder pew, for there sits a blind man. There are one or two here tonight whose natural eyes have for many years been sealed in darkness, and I say of them, if Jesus Christ has come to open anybody's eyes, He has come to open the eyes of the blind. It must be so. Infirmitiy and disability are necessary preparations for the receipt of the blessing of sight.

Suppose I heard that Jesus had come to make lame men leap like a hart. Well, I should look round and say that He did not come for that young girl—she can skip like a gazelle, and run like a fawn, He did not come for that young man—I saw him on his bicycle just now, flying over the ground as swiftly as a swallow skims the stream. Neither did the healer of the lame come for that strong brother over there, to which a quick, long walk is quite a pleasure. But just now there limped down yonder aisle a lame man on his crutches. Did you not hear his heavy movement? Well, if Jesus Christ came to heal lameness that is the kind of person that He had His eye upon.

When I hear of charity breakfasts being distributed, I never imagine for a moment that the select assembly that will be gathered to discuss a meal of porridge and bread will consist of members of the Houses of Lords and Commons, or of the royal family. I do not suppose that one of those honorable confraternities will be present at a festival with beggars, unless they should take a fancy to be lookers-on. If I went to a charity breakfast and saw some of the peerage there with basins and spoons, instead of stars and garters, I would say, "Turn out. You are not the people that ought to be here. You have no right at this entertainment. The richer, and the more respectable you are, the less right you have to be sitting at a meal that was meant for the poorest of the poor."

Now turn the parable around. If you are blinded in your spiritual sight, Christ came to open your eyes. If you are lame, so that you cannot run to Him, Christ came that He might restore you. If you are as poor as spiritual poverty can make you, poorer than that—as poor as sin can make you, and if you are as unable to help yourselves as the dead in the graves, then I remember that great truth, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It sounds curious, does it not? but it is so, "Christ died for our sins," not for our virtues.

It is not your efficiencies, but your deficiencies which entitle you to the Lord Jesus. It is not your wealth, but your want, it is not what you have, but what you have not, it is not what you can boast of, but what you mourn over, that qualifies you to receive the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came on purpose that those that see not might see. O blind eyes, I have good news for you. O souls that sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, my feet are beautiful tonight, for I bring you glad tidings of exceeding joy—light for the blind, gladness for the despairing, grace for the guilty.

Now I want you to consider the blind man of whom we were reading in the narrative just now as *a sort of model blind man*—the kind of blind man that Jesus Christ delights to look upon, and to whom He rejoices to give sight. This blind man *knew that he was blind*. He never had a doubt about that. He had never seen a ray of light, and yet he believed that he was blind—not quite so easy a matter as some of you may think, for I have met with thousands of blind men who laugh at the idea of sight because they have had no experience of it, and they refuse to believe more than they can understand or feel. This sightless beggar had to be told that there was such a thing as sight, but being so told he believed it, and all his after experience went to confirm the unhappy fact. Under a full persuasion that it was even so he had taken up the proper position for a poor, blind man, he sat by the wayside, and asked for alms.

Now, the man whom Christ delights to bless is the man who knows his right place, and is willing to occupy it. He does not conceal his blindness, and talk as if he carried a telescope about with him, and

communed all night with the stars. Many of you unconverted people are a deal too high, you will have to come down a good many notches before you will be in your true places. You are so excellent, are you not? and so intelligent, and so humble, and so well-meaning, and so everything that you ought to be! To you salvation will never come. The spirit of peace will never dwell in a nest which reeks of pride. In your own false judgment you are within an inch of being perfect, whereas the Lord knows that you are not half that distance from hell, if His justice were to be let loose upon you. You dream fine dreams in your fond conceit of yourselves, fancying that you have kept the law from your youth up, and that you are abundantly religious, and excellent, and admirable, and all that you ought to be. As long as you think thus highly of yourselves, the blessing is hindered and kept away. You self-exalting ones are not of the kind that Jesus came to bless. He said Himself, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Perhaps someone here is saying, "I do not understand it, I cannot get at this Gospel, I scarcely know my own condition. I am unhappy, I know; I am not right, I know; but I cannot describe myself, or see myself aright. As to this faith of which I hear so much, and this atoning blood which seems so mighty to cleanse, I seem as if I cannot perceive it or comprehend it. Alas, I am so blind!"

You speak the truth, my dear friend, and therein you are like the blind man in the Gospel. I pray that as Jesus healed *him*, so He will heal you, and I pray with strong confidence, too, for my Lord has certain fixed ways, and when He meets with certain cases He acts after the same method with them. Jesus is not arbitrary, but He has a way of procedure from which He does not deviate, so that, when He meets such a case as yours, He does the same with each instance of it, to the praise and glory of His name. Take up a blind beggar's position tonight, and sit down and cry for light and healing, and you shall certainly have them.

This blind man not only believed that he was blind and knew it, but *he had a sincere desire to be enlightened*. It was no grief to him that Jesus had come that he might see. It was an intense joy to hear that Jesus had opened the eyes of other blind men, and though he may have feared that his case was one quite out of the catalog—for since the world began it was not heard that any man had opened the eyes of one that was born blind—yet he was pleased to find that Jesus Christ had stopped and looked upon him, and was placing clay upon his eyes. He felt gladness and alacrity about his heart when he was bidden to go to Siloam and wash, his whole manhood went with the Savior's act and deed, he gave himself up to the surgery of the Christ with the full consent of his being.

Now, are you hungering after Christ? Oh, soul, if you know your need of Him, and have a strong desire after Him, the heavenly work is begun! If there is within your spirit a burning longing to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son, your cure is already half wrought.

Some of you have written me letters lately which show the actions of your heart, these are blind movements enough, but they all grope after light. Poor souls that you are, what hope I have for you! Especially for him who with broken heart has begged our prayers these many months and yet has not come out to light and liberty. I am so glad to see the strength, and vehemence, and agony of your desires. Your unbelief grieves me, but your eagerness charms me. Would God you would trust my Lord Jesus Christ and rest in Him! Still I am glad to think that you cannot rest without Him. I am glad that you cannot be quiet till He quiets you. No pillow will ever ease your head but my Lord's bosom. No hand but His can ever staunch your bleeding wounds. I am glad that it is so, for such a sinner as you are is well described by Hart—

*"A sinner is a sacred thing:
The Holy Ghost hath made Him so."*

The Spirit of God has set apart the blind soul to be a monument of the Illuminator's skill, He has made the lost soul to be the choice standing place whereon Christ may set His foot, and display all the splendor of His love.

This man is, again, a model to every other blind man because *he was very obedient*. As soon as the Lord said to him, "Go, wash," he went. There was no question with him about Siloam, he had no Abana or Pharpar which he preferred to that pool. He was fully submissive. He stood still, you know, and let the Master put the clay on his eyes. It did not look like an operation that could do him any good, but he believed that Jesus was a prophet, and so he waited, and let Him do whatever He pleased with him.

How glad I am when I can see a poor soul offering a full surrender to Jesus. Some of you heard last Monday night about the sweetness of yielding yourselves up to Jesus, how I wish you might now feel it. You will be more passive than active, a great deal, in the matter of your conversion. He will give you quickness of foot after He has once given you life, but in the inception of life, the first thing is just to own your death, and to be willing to receive life altogether from Him in His own way.

That is a good word in the prophet, "Oh Lord, thou art the potter, and we are the clay." Now, what can the clay do to help the potter? Nothing, only it must be pliable, it must yield to his hand. The clay must not be stiff, and hard, and unwilling to be molded, or it will be set aside.

O, be submissive to the saving hand! When you are brought into such a state of heart that you are willing to be anything or nothing so that you may be saved, dear soul, you are nigh unto the kingdom. If you can say, "I would give my life to be saved, or if the Lord refuses anything at my hands, I will gladly consent to be nothing if He will but save me," then you are on the doorstep of grace. I would so completely yield myself up to Christ as to feel what He would have me feel and nothing more, to be what He would have me be, and to do what He would have me do, and nothing beyond.

If you are thus submissive, I tell you to take heart of hope. The Spirit of God is at work with you. You are very near to Christ. Believe on Him, trust in Him, and live, for He has come on purpose that they that see not might see. Catch at that sacred purpose of amazing grace, and let your despair fly away.

This is our first remark, this blind man becomes our model.

And now notice next, that, *when he sees, this kind of man owns that he does see*. He has been so thoroughly convinced of his blindness that, when he gets his sight, he owns it with glad surprise. To him the newly given light is such a boon that he is overjoyed with it, and gladly cries, "Now I see." Some people do not know whether they are converted or not. I hope that they are saved, but such people are not generally of very much use. We have to spend our time and strength in taking care of them, and comforting them, and enabling them to rise above sheer despair.

But the man that has been totally blind, and has known it, when he gets sight he is equally sure that he sees. You cannot make such a man doubt the greatness and truthfulness of the change. He comes out and says, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." I delight in clear, sharp-cut conversions! I do not condemn those dear friends who come into light by slow degrees. Far, far, far from it! I delight in them, but still, for usefulness in testimony, and for decision of character, there is nothing like a conversion which is like life from the dead, and like turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

The old-fashioned convert is the man for me, he knows something, and holds fast by what he knows, his is experiential knowledge, and you cannot beat it out of him. I like to think of some of you utterly blind people who cannot help yourselves at all, for, when you receive the light, you will know it, and you will not hesitate to come out and say so. In your case the poor preacher will not be robbed of his wages, as he often is, when he saves a soul by God's grace but never hears of it. Neither will the Gospel be deprived of its witnesses, nor the church be despoiled of her helpers, nor the Lord be robbed of the revenue of glory which is His due. We expect from you blind folk grand testimonies for Jesus when once the Lord causes you to see.

Again, when the blind man's eyes were opened, *he began to defend the man that opened his eyes*. He did it well, too. He said, "Herein is a marvelous thing; that you know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." On he went with arguments which confounded scribe and Pharisee. When the Lord takes a big blind sinner, and washes him, and opens his eyes, then the man will not have Christ spoken against. He will speak up for His Lord and Master, he cannot help it. You will not find him

dumb, as some professors are. Why, some of your genteel Christians do not speak for Christ above once in six months, and then it would be better for them to have held your tongues, for they speak so half-heartedly. Here is a man with an open mouth, and he speaks right from his heart under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and is not ashamed to own what the Lord has done for him. We want many recruits of this sort.

The church at the present day wants men and women who are so thoroughly and certainly converted that, when they speak about Christ, they speak positively, and with a power which none can gainsay or resist. I think I hear you poor, darkened, desolate one crying out, "Oh, sir, if the Lord were to save me, I would not be ashamed to own it. If He should ever bring me in among His people I will tell them all about it. I will tell the very devils in hell what sovereign grace has done for me."

Oh, my poor brother, you are Christ's man! You are the kind of man He delights to bless. You poor, devil-dragged sinners, who are almost at your wits' ends, and would even take away your own lives if it were not a most horrible sin—you are the very ones upon whom the Lord in mercy looks tonight, for He said Himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Only trust yourselves in His dear hands, and believe that He can, and that He will save you, and you shall be saved, and then I know that you will own His name, defend His truth, glory in His cross, and live to His praise. Those who see not shall be made to see, and then the Lord Jesus shall be the Lord of their hearts, the Master of their lives, and the Beloved of their souls.

The best thing about this man was that, when his eyes were opened, *he wished to know more*, and when Jesus Christ spoke to him, saying, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" he asked, "Who is he, Lord that I might believe on him?" When He found that the Son of God was the selfsame divine One who had opened his eyes, then we read that at once he worshipped Him. Notice that at the end of the thirty-eighth verse, "And he worshipped him." He was no Unitarian. In the man who spoke with him he saw the Son of God, and he reverently adored Him.

If our Lord Jesus had not been God, He would have told the man to rise, and He would have rent His garments in horror at the bare idea of receiving divine worship, instead of which, our Lord instanced this as a proof that the man's eyes were opened, and immediately said that He had come for that very purpose—that those that did not see might see.

Friends, if you have not seen Jesus of Nazareth to be "very God of very God," you have seen nothing. You cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of Him. Until you get to know that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, exalted on high to give repentance and forgiveness of sin, you need still that there should fall from your eyes, as it were, scales, for the light eternal has not come to you.

He that once receives the true light from God will know the Lord Jesus, not as a delegated God, or a glorified man, but as God over all, blessed forever. He will have a God to save him, and nobody else, for who could save us but the Almighty? I would not trust the tenth part of my soul with ten thousand Gabriels, and I could not repose it anywhere but in Him that is able to save to the uttermost—even that same God without whom was not anything made that was made.

Thus I have shown you how this model blind man is the very man to whom the Lord Jesus will give sight, because the results that follow are glorifying to Christ. Are you such a person? Then, be comforted.

But *how is it that such blind men do come clearly to see?* The reason is sovereign grace, but still there are other reasons.

First, there is no conceit in them to hinder Christ. It is not our littleness that hinders Christ, but our bigness. It is not our weakness that hinders Christ, it is our strength. It is not our darkness that hinders Christ, it is our supposed light that holds back His hand. It is easier to save us from our sins than from our righteousnesses. Our self-righteousness is that hideous boa constrictor which seems to coil itself

round and round our spirit, and to crush out of us all the life that would receive the Gospel of the grace of God. He that thinks that he knows will never learn. He that is blind and thinks that he sees will remain contented in the darkness all his life long. Now, dear friends, if you are in the state that you know that you are in the dark—a darkness that may be felt—if it seems horribly to cling to you, so that you cannot get rid of it, if you seem unable even to obtain a ray of light, then you are just in the right state to receive the eternal light from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next reason is that such people as this always refuse to speculate. They want certainties. When a man feels his own blindness and spiritual death, if you discuss before him the fine new nothings of modern theology, he says, “I do not want them, they are of no consequence to me, there is no comfort in them for a lost soul.”

A poor thief was converted some little time ago, and he was taken to hear a certain preacher who is exceedingly broad in his views. When the reclaimed thief came out, he said to a friend that took him, “If what that man said was true, it would be a fine thing for me, for I could have my full swing, and yet get off easy, but I know that it is a lie, and therefore I do not want to have anything more to do with him or his doctrine. A sinner like me deserves to be damned forever, and it is no use for anybody to tell me the contrary, therefore I want a Christ that can save me from eternal damnation. If this man’s Christ only saves men from the little bit of damnation that he has preached, he is no good to me.” That was a very sensible observation.

We also need a Savior from eternal damnation, and we do not care for those little saviors from a little hell which are nowadays so much cried up. We have a lot of sham sinners about, and we have a number of ministers who preach a sham savior, and a sham salvation, and the sham sinners like to have it so. But if Christ once deals with you—pulls you down to the last course, and digs your foundations up, then you will want a Christ that will begin with you upon no terms but those of free grace, and you will want a power that will work the whole miracle of salvation for you from beginning to end. If you are yourselves utterly without strength, that makes you reachable by the strength of grace.

When a man gives up his pretty speculations and just sticks to the old teaching from the divine Word, he wants a great Savior to save him from a great hell, for he feels himself to be one who has been a great sinner, and greatly deserves the infinite wrath of God. If your salvation should be too big for you, that will be a great deal better than getting one that will be too small for you, yet, if you think that the salvation of Jesus is too great for you, it shows that you are not the man for whom it is meant. Our fear is that you are one of those that see but will be made blind. If you feel your blindness, and cry out to God about it, you are the man for whom the sight-giving Savior died.

Again, people who are thoroughly blind are the kind of people who are glad to lean on God. A man that can see a little does not want to borrow guidance from without. He says, “No, no! I do not want it.” Take a homely illustration from myself, I used to be very backward in using spectacles for some time, because I could almost see without them, and I did not wish to be an old gentleman too soon. But now that I cannot read my notes at all without wearing spectacles, I put them on without a moment’s hesitation, and I do not care whether you think me old or not.

So when a man comes to feel thoroughly guilty, he does not mind depending upon God. If you sinners think that you can do a little without God, or can do with just a little help from God, why then you will keep away from the Lord Jesus. But when you come to this, “I must perish if Christ is not everything to me,” why, then you *will* have Him, for He never refused a soul that came to Him in that style.

You may have heard the story of the Negro and his master who were both under conviction of sin at the same time. Almost the next evening the Negro found joy and peace through believing, but his master was months under conviction. So he said to the Negro one day, “Sam, you know we were both pricked to the heart at that meeting, and here are you rejoicing in Christ, and I am still doubting and despairing. What can be the reason of it?” The Negro said, “Why, you see, massa, Jesus Christ come along, and bring a fine robe of glorious righteousness, and say to Sambo, ‘Here is a robe for you!’ I look at myself,

and see Sam all rags from head to foot, and I take the robe, and puts it on directly, so glad to have it. Jesus say same thing to massa, but massa say, ‘My coat is very respectable. I think I can make it last a little longer. Massa patch up the hole in the elbow, and mend the skirt a little, and he go on with it. Massa’s coat too good. If his coat were all in rags, like Sam’s, he would not wait, but he would this very day take the glorious robe of righteousness.’” That is the whole truth of the matter. Some of you are not poor enough to be made rich by Christ.

A man said to me the other day, “Sir, I despair of myself.” “Give me your hand,” I said, “You are on the right road, but I want you to go a little further. I want you to feel that you are too great a fool even to despair of yourself.” When you cry, “I cannot feel my own folly as I should,” then I think your folly will be ended. I like to hear a man cry, “I feel unhappy because I cannot feel. I am grieved to think that I cannot grieve. I am in an agony because I cannot get into an agony.” You are getting right, my brother. You are the sort of man that God will bless.

Now, look away from yourself, agony and all, and just trust in Jesus Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Own your blindness, and you shall find the light come streaming into your eyes. Because you are content and willing to lean wholly upon God, the Lord will guide you into peace and joy. What a mercy it is when we are brought to our last resort, and are compelled to hide in Jesus because we have no other shelter!

*“Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large;
While we can call one mite own,
We get no full discharge.*

*But let our debts be what they may,
However great or small,
As soon as we have nought to pay
Our Lord forgives us all.”*

Once more, our Lord Jesus Christ does delight to work in those who are thoroughly blind in order to give them sight, it is high pleasure, His royal recreation. I know that a true man is never so glad as when he has helped those who want help. The plague and worry of this London life to some of us is that so many apply to us for help who ought never to be helped at all, except by the policeman, and the jailer. They cringe, and fawn, and make up lying stories, and when we say, “We will call upon you to see if it is true,” they ask in mighty indignation, “Do you think I am a liar? Don’t you believe what I say?” I have had to answer, “No, I do not believe a word of it, or you would gladly give your address that we might inquire into your statements.”

They do not want to be inquired into, that is their horror, for it spoils their game. They want to get money without work, and they thirst for an opportunity to get drunk at other people’s expense. A true man does not like to work among cants and cheats of this kind, it makes him sick and angry, yet many a man has been well pleased to go down to the worst place in “horrible London,” and to do good to those who are really poor and helpless. One does not like giving to impostors, but where there is real need the generous heart is pleased to afford aid.

Now, you poor soul, you are no imposter, yours is real need. You can say, “A poor beggar? Ah, that I am! Does the Lord want to inquire about me? I beseech Him to inquire. Search me, O Lord, try me, and know my heart. I know that You will see no righteousness in me. There is nothing in me upon which I can depend. I am, indeed, a helpless, miserable wretch, unless Your infinite mercy comes to me.” My Lord Jesus Christ rejoices to work among such as you are. He likes blessing the truly necessitous. What a joy there is in that great heart of His when He can save souls on the borders of hell—when He can stretch out His hand and snatch them like brands from the fire. He knows that you will love Him as much as that woman did who had much forgiven, and therefore stood and washed His feet with her

tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. He takes delight in you that cannot take any delight in yourselves. To you that are dried up and barren He will bring living water. He will open rivers in high places for the thirsty ones and fountains in the midst of the desert for them that faint.

I have felt a wonderful satisfaction in feeding a poor half-starved dog that had no master, and nothing to eat. How he has looked up with pleasure in my face when he has been fed to the full! Depend upon it, the Lord Jesus Christ will take delight in feeding a poor hungry sinner. You feel like a poor dog, do you not? Then Jesus cares for you. He does not care about kings and princes, and those great people whose grandeur dazzles beholders, but He cares about poor sinners. If you are nothing, Christ loves you, and He will be everything to you. If you will but come to Him, just as you are, with no plea of any kind except your urgent necessity, and your dread of the wrath of God, you may come, and be sure of a welcome.

One said to me this week, "I am afraid to come to God, for I believe that I am only driven to Him by the base motive of fear." "Ah," I replied, "it was the devil who told you that, because in the eleventh of Hebrews, among the first of the great heroes of faith we read that Noah, being moved with fear, built an ark for the saving of his house." Fear is not a base motive, it is a very proper motive for a guilty man to feel. Where else can such poor sinners as we are begin, except with selfish fear? Do not judge yourself about that, the prodigal went home because he was hungry, yet his father did not refuse him admittance.

As to its being base to fear, it would be baser still to defy your God. You ought not to say, "It is too base a motive." Why, what but a base motive can be expected from such a base wretch as you are? A boy has been rebelling against his father, and he has left his home in high passion, swearing that he will never go back. His father sends him a letter, and says, "Return, everything is forgiven, only confess your fault, and I will restore you to the family, and treat you as lovingly as ever."

The boy reads this letter, and he says, "It is very kind of my father, I think I will go home." But a wicked companion says, "Then you are going to eat humble pie. It will be very base of you after all you have said about fighting this matter through. Are you going to knuckle under to your father?" Why, it is the very devil tempting the boy, is it not? And so it was the devil who whispered to my friend that it would be to turn to the Lord through fear. Fear is a blessed thing—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and even slavish fear of God is a great deal better thing than presumption.

Oh, you poor blind one, look to Christ, and live! I was about to say, "Ye dead ones, come;" and I do say it, for God says it—"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." "What is the use of talking thus to dead people?" asks one. My dear friends, I do not suppose that it would be of any use for you to do so, because, you see, you were never sent on such an errand, but I am as much sent to preach to the dry bones tonight as Ezekiel was when he stood in the valley and said, "Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." In the name of the eternal God, I say, "Ye guilty sinners, fly to Christ, and live."

Come along with you, you who are the very worst in your own esteem—you who are all but in hell. The Lord says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." He will not cast you away, but He will receive you now. God grant that you may come, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 9

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—257, 602, 603

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.